**16.** Role-Playing.

**The Best Film of the Year**

Situation: The annual spectators' conference is held at the end of the year with the aim of selecting the best film of the year. Two films have won universal acclaim — an amusing comedy and an earnest, thought-provoking feature film. Which of them should be awarded the first prize?

Characters:

1. *Sergey Tropov,* aged 28, a young and promising scientist. Sci­entific exploration is his life. Rather tired. Likes cinema very much but understands it as entertainment versus art. He goes to the pic­tures to relax and to enjoy himself. Believes that all people go to the cinema to have a good laugh and to forget their worries. Thinks that the comedy under discussion is the best film of the year: the actors are in top form, the music in the picture creates a kind of frame-work for the story. The comedy he saw and liked has be­come a source of inspiration for his further investigation.

2. *Oleg Kaladze,* 20 year-old youth, a great cinema fan. His  
favourite actress is playing the leading role in the comedy, which  
Oleg likes very much. He is struck by the artistic guality of certain  
scenes. Is not impressed by the feature film. Thinks that it is ahead  
of its time and in fact acting is most important for the success of the  
film, while the plot is insignificant. Oleg is for the comedy.

1. *Alia Larina,* aged 25, a teacher of Russian Literature. Doesn't  
   think it is possible to discuss these two films as they belong to dif­  
   ferent genres. Each is fine in its own way. The feature reflects a hu­  
   man creature, his ideas. It represents an individual consciousness.  
   Its excellence lies in its power over other people's minds. The com­  
   edy gives you a short and pleasant rest, a kind of relaxation. Both  
   films are superb, both are the best.
2. *Boris Runin,* aged 47, a well-known film director who has  
   made quite a number of features and popular science films. Always  
   works in this genre. Thinks that a comedy is a simple entertain­  
   ment and the comedy under discussion is no exception. It contains  
   pleasant images but teaches you nothing. You like it because it is  
   unreal, offers an escape. But it doesn't affect the spectator. He  
   leaves the theatre in the same darkness with which he entered it.  
   Naturally Boris is for the feature film.
3. *Rita Strogova,* aged 60, a pensioner, prefers the feature film  
   which made her think a lot and raised many problems. Despises  
   people who produce and like comedies and other films «for mere  
   entertainment. Thinks that people who go to these films don't want  
   to be bothered, they don't want responsibility, they want to remain  
   asleep. Rita's idea is that "no matter how spectacular, the film will  
   be a failure if it has no real message". Rita is for the feature film.
4. *Helen Grabova,* aged 45, a famous actress, starred in many  
   films. Sees a lot of advantages in both films, but she never gives  
   judgements about her colleagues. Thinks that an artist can no  
   more judge another artist than one child can judge other children.  
   Each artist has his particular vision. You can't wear someone else's  
   glasses; they would fit badly, and you wouldn't see. The artist's  
   glasses only work when they are put on non-artists, whom they  
   move, touch, surprise. Thinks as both films have had long and suc­  
   cessful runs they both should be equally rewarded.

Note: Divide your group into two teams, each of which should perform the same role play. While discussing the films show their merits and imperfections. Speak about the impression both films have produced on your character. Disagree with some of the participants of the conference, share the others' points of view if

**2.**

**3.**

you feel like it, defend your own point of view. At the end of the conference you should select the best film of the year (perhaps with a vote). Comments from the class on each team's performance and the value of the different arguments are in­vited.

17. Group Discussion.

Give your own views on the problems below and speak against your oppo­nent.

**Topic 1.** *The role of cinema in our life*

Talking points:

1. Different genres of films, their impact on the spectators.
2. Development of people's cultural level, taste.
3. Films for entertainment and education.
4. Cinema in the classroom (Geography, History, Literature,  
   Foreign Language).
5. Films to instruct: a) in an industry to teach people how to ac­  
   quire skills, to learn their profession; b) in medicine to show the ac­  
   tion of heart and pulse and other organs, to watch delicate opera­  
   tions being performed by noted surgeons, etc.; c) in science to see  
   the world of small things, etc.; d) in sport to give objective judge­  
   ment during the competition, etc.

**Topic 2.** *Is the ability to perform an inborn gift or is it an acquired skill?*

Talking points:

1. The artistic potential of a person, his timing.
2. Skilful directors, modern techniques, the possibilities of the  
   camera to accentuate.
3. The value of experience, necessity to acquire technique.

**Topic 3.** *Should the actor "live" the part or should he just perform?*

Note: The first would mean that the actor tries to sympathize with his charac­ter, to fully understand and share his feelings — despairing with him, loving and hating with him, shedding real tears. The second implies just going through the motions of the role with cool head. The first school (e. *g.* K.S.Stanislavsky's meth­od) relies on both feeling and technique, the second, entirely on technique.

Talking points:

1. Necessity to look at the character from a distance, to sympa­  
   thize and criticize, to understand him.
2. Practice in reproduction of the character before the audience.
3. Effect achieved: the less actors feel, the firmer their hold  
   upon their facial and bodily expression.
4. A possibility of reaching such a state of mechanical perfec­  
   tion that one's body is absolutely the slave of one's mind.
5. Necessity for actors to work with their own tools. (Each actor  
   should choose the method he feels is best for him.)